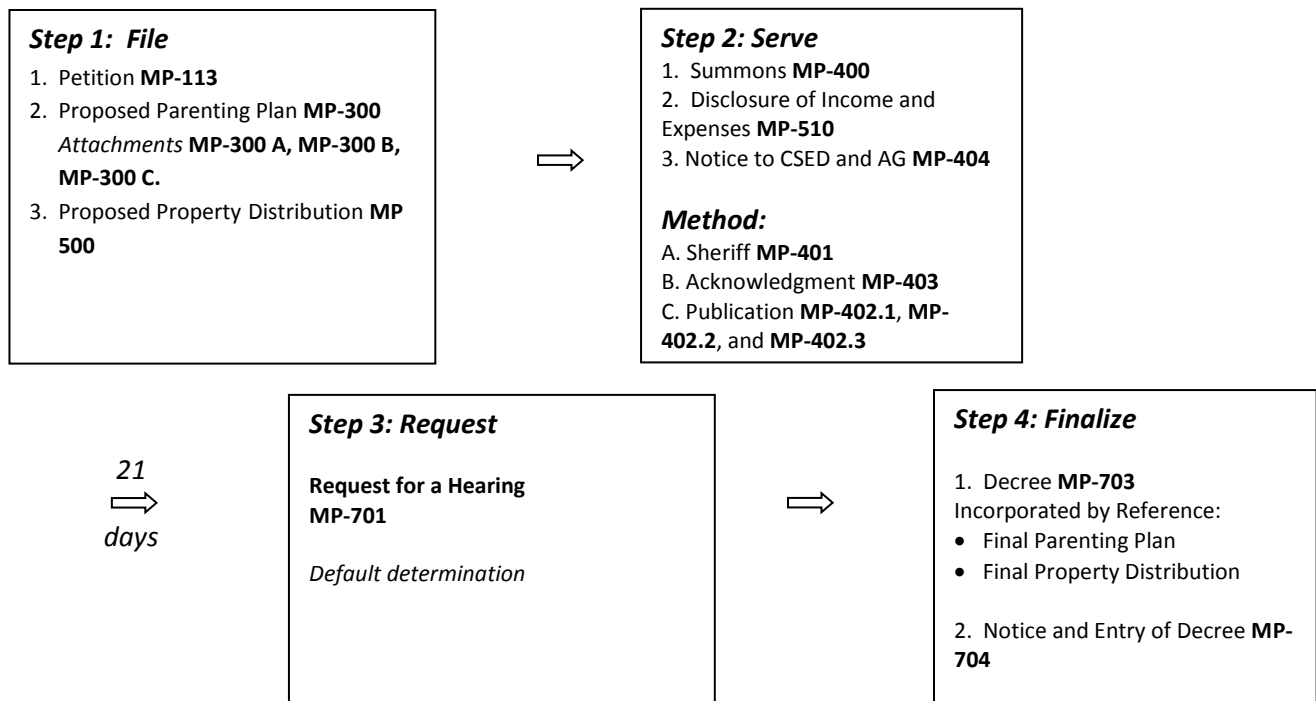


Dissolution with Children Self Represented Litigant Form Process

The following, is a brief description of the dissolution with children process proposed by the revised forms.



The Standing Committee numbered all forms to help litigants easily identify required forms. The format for each dissolution form is MP-XXX. MP stands for “Marriage and Parenting” followed by the specific number. The revised dissolution with children packet as contemplates both contested and uncontested dissolution scenarios.

The first step is the initial filing. The revised process instructs a litigant to complete a **Petition for Dissolution (MP-113)** and accompanying documents. Accompanying documents include the **Proposed Parenting Plan (MP-300)** and **Proposed Property Distribution (MP-500)** and attachments.

The next step is service. In order to comply with financial disclosure requirements, the litigant must serve the initial filing documents (Petition, Parenting Plan, and Proposed Property Distribution), the **Summons and Temporary Economic Restraining Order (MP-400)**, and a **Disclosure of Income and Expenses (MP-510)**. Each litigant has three service options and may serve the other party by **Requesting the Sheriff to Serve (MP-401)**, sending an **Acknowledgment of Service (MP-403)** to the other party, or **Service by Publication (MP**

402.1-402.3). Service by publication is a last resort and will involve a request for an **Order Granting Service by Publication (MP 402.3)** from the Court. The Parenting Plan also instructs the litigant, where appropriate, to serve a **Notice and Acknowledgment to Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) and the Attorney General's Office (AG) (MP-404).**

After the Respondent is served all of the documents necessary, the Respondent will have the opportunity to answer the Petition. The Committee has not yet drafted an Answer. Respondent's will still be able to use the standard Answer form currently available and file their own **Proposed Parenting Plan (MP-300)** and **Proposed Property Distribution (MP 500).** Revised forms also provide the opportunity for parties to file an "agreed" version of either document, thereby narrowing the extent that the case is contested.

After the requisite 21 days has expired, either party may **Request a Final Hearing on the Dissolution (MP-701).** At this time, the party requesting a hearing will indicate what has been filed and served in order for the court to make an informed approval for the hearing. At this stage, Clerks of Court may also enter a default if appropriate. Litigants will be instructed to file a proposed **Dissolution Decree (MP-703)** along with the **Request for a Hearing (MP-701).** The **Dissolution Decree (MP-703)** will adopt and incorporate by reference, the appropriate Proposed Parenting Plan (MP-300) and Proposed Property Distribution (**MP 500**). Thus, the documents will be in the Final Decree. Litigants will be instructed to file a **Notice and Entry of Decree (MP-704)** after the hearing to finalize the dissolution.

The Standing Committee worked to develop forms that balance statutory requirements, best practices, and procedural realities. The Standing Committee incorporated national developments in design, plain language, and readability to make the forms more understandable to a SRL. A litigant who understands the forms is more likely to accurately and fully complete the forms, improving a court's ability to fairly and efficiently adjudicate their case.

Thank you for taking the time to help us increase court efficiency and promote meaningful access to justice in our court system. We look forward to receiving your feedback on the revised forms.